

SR 7 Route Development Plan (Phase 1)

Public Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: October 13, 2005

Location: Bob Lyle Community Center, Morton WA

Staff

- Lynn Hakes, WSDOT Olympic Region
- John Donahue, WSDOT Olympic Region
- Karyn Anderson, WSDOT Southwest Region
- Yvette Liufau, WSDOT Olympic Region
- Vicki Steigner, WSDOT Olympic Region
- Bob Jones, WSDOT Olympic Region
- Seth Gallant, WSDOT Southwest Region

WELCOME

John Donahue, WSDOT Olympic Region, opened the meeting by welcoming the public. Twenty-two members of the community attended the meeting.

Since the last public meeting, the WSDOT team and stakeholder committee had developed recommendations for improving SR 7 based largely on input received through the public involvement process. The team presented these recommendations recently at an in-progress-review with Southwest Region and Headquarters WSDOT. The in-progress-review provided an opportunity for internal discussion and approval before presenting the study findings and recommendations to the public. The stakeholder committee met on September 29th, and endorsed recommendations for the development of SR 7. The purpose of the public meeting was to receive input and answer any questions the public may have regarding these recommendations.

SEGMENT 1 – MORTON URBAN GROWTH AREA

Lynn Hakes presented the recommendations that had been endorsed during the last stakeholder committee meeting for locations within the urban growth area of Morton. All recommendations within the city of Morton would require the city's agreement and participation.

SR 7 and Westlake Avenue:

The goal at this intersection was to improve conditions for pedestrians, clarify delineation for traffic and improve access control. The endorsed recommendation is to reduce the width of SR 7 immediately north of Westlake Avenue by leaving an 8-foot shoulder on the west side of the highway adjacent to the Chevron Station and installing curbs and sidewalks. The roadway could be narrowed even further by removing the southbound right turn lane without compromising the flow of traffic at that intersection.

As an alternative to this recommendation, a concurrent study (US 12 Scenic Byway) is recommending a gateway treatment for the city of Morton. The gateway treatment

concept includes the installation of a traffic island in SR 7, moving the city's statue of a logger (currently located on the east side of SR 7) to this island. A traffic island could provide similar pedestrian improvements, delineation and access control at this intersection. Preliminary investigation concluded that immediately north of Westlake Avenue adequate state right of way exists to build this island and still provide adequate lane widths and clear zones. WSDOT will work with the city of Morton to accommodate a gateway treatment if this is the solution they prefer.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

SR 7: Adams Street to Westlake Avenue

The endorsed recommendation is to enclose the deep drainage ditches and extend city sidewalks along this segment of SR 7 to increase pedestrian and motorist safety and provide better access control.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

SR 7 – SR 508/Davis Lake Road Intersection:

The endorsed recommendation is to extend the loading zone/no parking curb markings in the northwest quadrant from the existing 26 feet to 76 feet. The additional 50 feet will improve sight-distance at this intersection by keeping parked cars from blocking the vision of those approaching SR 7 on SR 508 from the west.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

SR 7: Fairhart Way Intersection

The endorsed recommendation is to improve sight-distance at this location by cutting back the embankment in the southeast quadrant of this intersection.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

SEGMENT 2 – MORTON URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY TO PIERCE COUNTY LINE

Karyn Anderson presented the recommendations that had been endorsed during the last stakeholder committee meeting for SR 7 from the Morton Urban Growth Boundary north to the Pierce County line.

SR 7: Length of Route

Recommendations include developing slow vehicle turnout locations, law enforcement turnouts and chain up/chain off locations. Shoulders on SR 7 should be constructed to Design Manual standards (at least 3 feet). The study route meets the warrants for the installation of shoulder rumble strips to prevent run-off-the-road accidents, and the recommendation is that they be installed for the length of the route.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

SR 7: Specific Locations

There are two specific locations on the study route where improvements are recommended:

SR 7/Murray Road Intersection: Raise the grade of Murray Road at its intersection with SR 7 to improve sight-distance that is impaired by the bridge rail and guardrail immediately south of the intersection, and realign SR 7 to straighten it as it approaches the bridge from the north.

Traffic volumes and roadway geometrics were analyzed at Mineral Road North, and the recommendation is to install a left-turn pocket for southbound traffic on SR 7 wanting to turn left on Mineral Road North.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

SR 7: Near Term Recommendations

Several recommendations that could be implemented in the near term were included. They are installing signs warning of the presence of wildlife and curves, removing vegetation that shades the highway, and signs warning of icy road conditions. These recommendations will be forwarded to the SW Region WSDOT offices responsible for consideration/implementation of these recommendations.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

SR 7: Transportation Partnership Funding Safety Improvements

Lynn explained that during the 2005 session, the state legislators passed the Transportation Partnership Funding Package, which included \$1.7 million for roadside safety improvements on SR 7.

Lynn explained that WSDOT staff identified potential guardrail locations along SR 7. Staff looked at 37 places along the study route that had higher societal costs associated with run-off-the-road accidents. Shoulder widths, the length and degree of slope, the recovery area, and clear zone were measured and evaluated. Of the 37 locations, staff identified nine that might warrant improvements. These locations have been selected independent of the established WSDOT High Accident Corridor/High Accident Location safety program.

(See summary of Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 for more information.)

After the recommendations were presented, the meeting was opened to comments from the meeting attendees. The comments were:

- Because SR 7 runs through town, Context Sensitive Design needs to be considered.
- It is important for economic development to get traffic traveling on US 12 to turn onto SR 7. Some type of gateway treatment might encourage them to want to turn onto SR 7.

- The US 12 Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan was described by a stakeholder committee member attending. The plan calls for signs to be placed along US 12 to replace the old blue signs. These signs were obtained using grant money. (Approximately \$136,000 for 13 signs) The signs will be placed at each “gateway” community entrance along US 12. They will be stone based, distinctive, and aesthetically pleasing.
- The gateway treatment was discussed with the option of moving “Ole” into the median area. The city is working on its Comprehensive Plan update, and through the Regional Transportation Planning Organization there is the potential opportunity to incorporate Context Sensitive Design.
- An audience member echoed that better signing to the town of Mineral is also needed (brown sign or symbol type) since there are services available in Mineral that the traveling public may be unaware of. She inquired about the cost of signs along SR 7.
- There needs to be more parking in Morton on SR 7, especially near the Chevron Station.
- Some in the audience felt parking was *not* necessary at Chevron.
- The access at the Chevron station is not well defined, there are various entry points.
- The suggestion was made to add “accommodating parking” to sidewalk recommendations between Adams Street and Westlake Avenue.
- At the intersection of SR 7 and SR 508 a 4-way stop is acceptable, new sidewalks at Westlake are necessary and repairing sidewalks near Adams is needed. A new town “sidewalk” committee member was in attendance and stated that they are interested in Context Sensitive Design and Grant Opportunities. Rosemary Siipola and team offered to follow up with this newly evolving committee.
- The intersection of SR 7 and SR 508/Davis Lake Road needs a signal stoplight. There needs to be pedestrian friendly crosswalks around town. Traffic will only stop if a state patrol officer is present. If they are not present, traffic will not yield to a pedestrian, unless they are *already* in the crosswalk.
- There is too much truck traffic and the intersection of SR 7 and SR 508/Davis Lake Road is too narrow. It wasn’t designed to handle truck traffic.
- Don’t take the flashing lights out at the intersection of SR 7 and SR 508/Davis Lake Road. We want people to slow down through town, not speed through town.
- We need mirrors at the intersection of SR 7 and SR 508/Davis Lake Road, so that motorists can see around the buildings.
- Consider extending 45 mph signs within the Morton UGA out to Lindberg. We need to slow people down on this route.
- Log truck traffic goes both ways on Fairhart Way now, but plans are to change Fairhart Way to a one-way road. This solution will work for Hampton Lumber.
- With the Rail Depot move, you need to look at pedestrian volumes on SR 508/Davis Lake Road. What is pedestrian traffic projected to be with depot and increased passenger train trips?

- Eventually, Fairhart Way will not be able to support two-lane traffic. However, the Lewis County representative offered to take another look at the proposal to make Fairhart Way one way.
- Meeting attendee asked what they would experience at a Level of Service (LOS) C, in simple terms. John Donahue described LOS and the peak hour volume that occurs at 3:00 – 4:00 in the afternoon.
- We need a pedestrian friendly community. We need to decrease traffic not move it faster through town.
- Were ball bank curve indicators used for speed advisory and guardrail location suggestions? The answer was no, shoulder, embankment and clear zone measurements were used.
- A stakeholder committee member attending the public meeting asked whether signs noting specific locations where icing occurs could be used on SR 7. A WSDOT maintenance employee said that these types of signs were not used. However, WSDOT will investigate whether an initial corridor warning sign or seasonal traffic advisory sign may be placed along the route.
- Was a proposal to change the access classifications on the study route still being considered? WSDOT staff responded that the access classifications on the study route would not be changed.
- “Head on Collision” Bridge near milepost 2.7 was discussed. What is being done to improve the safety at this bridge? Team explained the accident history of the bridge location (no accidents occurring at this location within the past 5 years). Geometry of this bridge may need recommended action. Forward this to the WSDOT Bridge office.
- How would rumble strips affect bicyclists who use the roadway? It was explained that wider shoulders are required when rumble strips are installed and there are gaps in the pattern providing bicyclists opportunities to ride across them.
- Someone reported cracks in roadway at milepost 5.0 – 6.0. WSDOT will check unstable slope database to see if a slide hazard is present in this location.
- Someone observed that the accidents that occur near milepost 12.6 may be the result of an icy road condition that is very persistent.

WRAP UP - Lynn explained that the next step is to write the Route Development Plan in October and November, and submit the final draft to WSDOT headquarters for final approval in December.

The team broke into smaller groups after the questions and comments segment. Team members thanked everyone for coming, being a part of this process, and for volunteering his or her time over the course of these past several months. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.